

Storytelling and Libraries: An Ideal Fit in any Community

Teresa Bailey

Jet Propulsion Laboratory, California Institute of Technology

Storytelling is a form of communication that taps into the intellect as well as the emotions. It establishes a bond between the storyteller and the audience. At the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), rapid changes in age demographics, dependence on electronic communication, and evolving organization structures demand that we create a variety of opportunities to share our stories.

The JPL Library offers an ideal physical setting not available anywhere else on Lab. When the JPL Library started *JPL Stories* in January 2000, we wanted to bring people together to share their experiences and wisdom. We knew we had a good chance for success because the JPL community is graced with exceptionally bright and creative individuals who have great stories to tell. We were confident that the Library would be a perfect setting for informal and personal discussions. From the beginning, the storytellers were greeted with increasingly larger standing-room only audiences. The feedback from story listeners and storytellers alike tells us that we have tapped into a rich resource at the laboratory, and that the story hours are nurturing a much-needed form of communication.

Storytelling and libraries are an ideal fit in any community. Bailey will discuss current research on storytelling in organizations and how libraries can promote storytelling in their communities. In addition, the presentation will include a description of the *JPL Stories* model and highlights from the program.